

See Howitt

total, 29 years: which at the low estimate of 150*l.* a year amounts to 4,350*l.*, making the whole outlay equivalent to 6,150*l.*; a positive loss in the aggregate of 5,150*l.*, beyond the prize of 1,000*l.*

As pictures so large, all of a given subject, peculiarly treated, and blighted by the vulgar stigma of defeat, stand no chance for sale, but really become a trouble and a nuisance to the artists, we may fairly say that in the aggregate this loss is wholly unmitigated, and that ten such speculative competitions would be equivalent to a loss among them of 50,000*l.* for 1,000*l.* each, or in other words, a total loss of two hundred and ninety years of human life, and 8,000*l.* of the artists' money.

By the mode we would suggest, the loss on the present occasion may be reduced to about 300*l.* in money and 17 years of time; that is, compared with the above, a saving of 525*l.* in money, and of nearly twelve years of time and exertion, whilst four or five paintings and twice that number of artists would be held up to distinction, instead of one, who, in the ordinary way, engenders admiration.

On a plan somewhat similar to the double competition trial, adopted by the French institute at the election of students for residence at Rome, we would have two exhibitions; thus, supposing the number of competitors to be as above, fifty. The first exhibition would be of 50 cartoons, half life size, and 50 studies, of half figures, life size. From these, eight or ten should be rewarded with preliminary prizes. To each the sum of 40*l.* or 50*l.* should be paid, i.e. an equal portion of 400*l.* These distinguished candidates are then entitled and invited to compete with each other for the ultimate object. Thus the final great struggle would be between these eight or ten, and the second exhibition would consist of their eight or ten cartoons and studies from their first exhibition, and eight or ten finished pictures full size.

Four or five prizes should be awarded in this competition according to the number of good productions, i.e. 200*l.* among them. Thus four or five would receive 40*l.* or 50*l.* each, and as many would have 80*l.* or 100*l.*

Of these twice rewarded four or five, by the final decision, one would receive the great prize of the remaining 400*l.* in addition to his previous rewards, amounting together to 480*l.* or 500*l.* Surely the honour and advantage of such a victory, if properly awarded, would satisfy an ambitious enthusiastic artist. Could any one, amidst the honours and comfort of the glorious harvest, envy his less successful rivals the small return their gleanings had procured them?

By this arrangement the outlay of money and time of the competitors would be,

	£.	Yrs.
For 50 cartoons, average 13 <i>l.</i> , and 3 months each.....	650	12½
50 studies, average 8 <i>l.</i> , and 14 days.....	400	2
8 or 10 (say 9) paintings, at 25 <i>l.</i> , and 5 months' average....	225	2½

General Total £1,275 — 17½

Let us now consider the best mode of awarding the prizes, and the way to secure a competent tribunal, without which no good result can be depended on. Much of the difficulty comes from the uncertainty of what is considered excellence in art: some adjudging by the dictates of common sense, untutored by the technical rules of art, others guided almost entirely by conventional technicalities. Again, personal or professional prejudices have not been sufficiently controlled by principles, or by responsibility.

The following regulations appear to us entitled to consideration and adoption; viz., the judges should consist of three, elected by the parties interested in the purchase; and three selected by the artist competitors; in all six persons. They should be elected by ballot after nomination: at least, this rule should be strictly observed in respect to those who represent the artists.

Each of the judges should separately, from others, examine and criticize the performances, and write his opinion of each, and of every work of art; and, naming those which he considers entitled to distinction, give his reasons for that opinion.

These written opinions to be given in pre-

vious to the opening of the exhibition to the public; but the result not to be confirmed until a certain number of days after its closing. Then the judges should, for the first time, meet and discuss each other's opinions, and the merits of the competitors; and, recording their matured judgments, decide by the majority; the contrary opinions being also recorded, in order that public opinion be not smothered, as it now usually is, under respect for a supposed unanimous decision.

GENTLEMEN.—Your committee beg to observe that, in this inquiry, they have considered it of the utmost importance to discuss both sides of every question, and on several occasions, its members have abandoned old favourite views, when the evidence or the argument outweighed a favourite prejudice; they are therefore the more confident in their anticipation of this report meeting with favourable attention, and serious consideration at your hands, and they sincerely hope it may eventually lead to changes equally advantageous to artists, and to the public; to the establishment of regulations more consistent with the immutable principles of equity and good sense, than those which have too often rendered competitions illusive and hurtful; and they trust that apparent difficulties in the operation of a wholesome system, will not weigh against the best interests of humanity, and the progress of the Fine Arts.

#### PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S GARDEN PORCH AT COMBE ABBEY, WARWICKSHIRE.

COMBE ABBEY, one of the seats of the Earls of Craven, is situate about four miles from Coventry. It is erected on the site of a religious house of the Cistercian order, founded by Richard de Camville, in the reign of King Stephen. Brimley tells us (in the "Beauties of England and Wales") that it was the first settlement of the Cistercian monks in the county of Warwick, and various benefactors arose whose pious gifts enabled the abbots and brethren, to maintain a course of secluded dignity through the long term of nearly four centuries. The monastery at the period of the dissolution in the reign of Henry VIII. became the property of the Crown, and was granted by Edward VI. to John, Earl of Warwick; and after the attainder of that nobleman was leased at the rent of 196*l.* 8*s.* 1*d.* to Robert Kelway, surveyor of the court wards and liveries, whose daughter, Anne, conveyed the possession, by marriage, to John Harrington, Esq., afterwards Lord Harrington. Lucy, the daughter of this lord, and wife to Edward, Earl of Bedford, became heir on the death of a brother; but the profuse expenses in which she indulged, caused the estate to be alienated to the ancestors of the Earl of Craven. In the latter noble family it is at present vested.

Great portion of the present building was raised by Lord Harrington; of the ancient monastic pile a portion of the cloisters only remains; these form a fine corridor, which ranges along the lower division of the building, and they are adorned with the projecting antlers of stags of every growth and size, black jacks, and various emblems of baronial free warren. On the west side of the house is a large addition, said to be by Inigo Jones, but which is more probably the work of Captain William Winde, the pupil of Sir Balthazar Gerbier; at least, it is ascribed to him by Horace Walpole (see his "Anecdotes," vol. iii. p. 169, Dallaway's edition). This building, which is externally of heavy character, contains some noble apartments. The rest of the edifice is of the Elizabethan style, requiring very little alteration to render it a regular and magnificent structure. Higher interest attaches to this building than what it derives from its monastic remains. It was here that the Princess Elizabeth, the daughter of James I., the beautiful and unfortunate Queen of Bohemia, passed the early days of her life under the tuition of the accomplished Lord Harrington. From this spot the Guy Faux conspirators had formed a scheme to remove her; a party, under the pretence of hunting, were to assemble near the house, seize the person of the princess, and, by proclaiming her queen, use her name in stilling and composing the minds of the people, leaving the after-task of converting her to Catholicism to the labour of the Jesuits. The enterprise was confided to Sir

Everard Digby, who kept the appointment faithfully, but the attempt failed, and the princess escaped to Coventry. A very interesting account of the capture of the conspirators is given in Mr. Howitt's interesting volume, "Visits to remarkable Places in the account of Combe Abbey."

Few persons have been more celebrated in history than the Princess Elizabeth for virtues, talents, strength of mind, sweetness of temper, and gaiety of heart; these amiable qualities, joined to no inconsiderable share of personal beauty, obtained for her the title of the "Queen of Hearts." It was to Elizabeth that Sir Henry Wotton addressed the elegant lines, commencing

"You manner beauties of the night,  
That weakles astirre our eyes,  
More by your number than your light,  
Like common people of the skies,  
What are you when the moon doth rise?"

She was married at the early age of sixteen, to Frederick V., the elector palatine of the Rhine. The ceremony took place in the banquetting room at Whitehall. Their arrival in the palatinate was hailed by their subjects with the most enthusiastic joy; and during the few years in which they inhabited the palace at Heidelberg, it was the seat of unprecedented splendour and felicity. "To gratify the fine taste, which Elizabeth had acquired for gardening and the fine arts, Frederick, soon after their arrival at Heidelberg, caused an extensive part of the mountain adjoining the palace to be levelled, and planted as a garden for her recreation. In this, not merely shrubs, orange and lime trees, but forest trees of large growth, were introduced. In the centre of the flower garden was an elegant fountain, ingeniously constructed for purposes of irrigation; and from the edge of the precipice fell an artificial sheet of water, resembling a natural cascade. The principal entrance to this inclosure, which is now the botanic garden of the university, has escaped the devastation generally committed in this place, and bears a Latin inscription, purporting that it was raised in 1615, by Frederick V., in honour of his beloved wife, Elizabeth."

On the election of Frederick as King of Bohemia, in 1618, he left that enchanting abode, Heidelberg Castle, where he and his family had enjoyed so much power, respect, and domestic happiness. After the battle of Prague, which deprived him at once of his regal dignity and hereditary right, he became a wanderer without a home, and terminated a life of extraordinary vicissitude, by that worst of all maladies, a broken heart, at the early age of thirty-six.

The part the princess bore in causing the misfortunes of her husband, is so strongly drawn by Mrs. Jameson, in her interesting "Visits at Home and Abroad," that, at the risk of repeating portions of the story, I will venture to quote from her. Thus, speaking of Elizabeth and the most striking events of her history, that of occasioning the celebrated thirty years' war:—"Medon: Do you forget that the cause of the thirty years' war was a woman? Alas! A woman and religion—the two best or worst things in the world, according as they are understood and felt, used and abused. You allude to Elizabeth of Bohemia, who was to Heidelberg what Helen was to Troy. One of the most interesting monuments of Heidelberg, at least to an English traveller, is the elegant triumphal arch raised by the Palatine Frederick V. in honour of his bride—this very Elizabeth Stuart. I well remember with what self-complacency and enthusiasm our chief walked about in a heavy rain, examining, dwelling upon every trace of this celebrated and unhappy woman. She had been educated at his country seat; and one of the avenues of his magnificent park yet bears her name. On her fell a double portion of the miseries of her fated family. She had the beauty and the wit, the gay spirits, the elegant tastes, the kindly disposition of her grandmother, Mary of Scotland; her very virtues as a wife and woman, not less than her pride and feminine prejudices, ruined herself, her husband, and her people. When Frederick hesitated to accept the crown of Bohemia, his spirited wife exclaimed: "Let me rather eat dry bread at a king's table than feast at the board of an elector;" and it seemed as if some

\* From the description in Widd's "Fitzed Outlines."